Perfect Imperfection

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Perfect Imperfection

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Summary

"Ichigo and I are just friends."

'Friends...', Is that really all there was to their relationship, or was it something more? She couldn't help but wonder. Could she...like him? Did he feel the same? Could love between human and Shinigami exist? Was it possible to cross those boundaries? Bad sum, better story. ICHIRUKI and references to ByaHisa. Reactions of Byakuya, Renji and Inoue included. IN char. Plz Review.

Chapter 1

Summary: ***"Ichigo and I are just friends." 'Friends...' Is that really all there was to their relationship, or was it something more? She couldn't help but wonder. Could she...like him? Did he feel the same? Could love between human and Shinigami exist? Was it possible to cross those boundaries?***

Disclaimer: ***I don't own Bleach...***

Quote - *"You don't love someone because they're perfect, you love them in spite of the fact that they're not."*

Quote - *"You should not hate imperfection, for that is what brings people together. Our flaws, and shortcomings in life, is what allows us to have hopes and dreams."*

~ Flashback ~

"Hey, Kuchiki-san,"

Rukia looked up from her book, placing it on the desk. She greeted her classmate, Izumi. "Why, hello, Hikari-san."

"I was kind of wondering," Izumi said, standing in front of her desk. Ichigo had momentarily left the classroom. The girl rose a questioning brow. "you and Kurosaki-san seem to be quite close. Do you like him or somethin'?"

"*Yeah, I was wondering that, myself." added Kantaru, another female classmate, as she suddenly popped out of no where. "I think you two would be cute together. So, what's your relationship?"*

"*Kurosaki-san and I are..." Rukia placed a finger on her chin, ruminating for a moment. Finally, she looked back up, smiling. "We're just friends."*

"*Are you sure?" Izumi questioned disappointingly.*

"*I can't see us as anything else," the raven shrugged. "We're just close friends. That's the only way I can put it."*

~ End of Flashback ~

"Is that really all there is to it...?" Rukia mused silently. "Are we really just friends...? Or do I *like* Ichigo...? Would normal friends go out of there way to stop an execution, just for the sake of another? He *did* go after Inoue-san in Hueco Mundo...but..."

She looked up with uncertainty to study Ichigo as he slept. *'Ichigo might deny it, but I want to think there's something more to our relationship than just friendship. Why is it that I get so worked up at the thought of losing him...? That time I felt his reiatsu disappear, It suddenly felt like a part of me was gone as well. All hope, and sense of judgement was lost. It was even worse than the feeling of losing Renji, or any of the others, yet It was similar to how I felt when I thought Nii-sama had died, but still slightly different... It was something I can't easily explain..."*

"Oi, Midget...How am I suppose to rest, with you staring at me like that?" his voice seemingly startled her, causing her to jump. He cocked an eyebrow at her tenseness. "What's with you? "

"Ichigo, I..." Rukia averted her gaze, her heart skipping a beat. "I think I like you..."

Ichigo bit his tongue, his breath catching in his throat. His eyes widened, as he shot up in the futon. "You think you*what*?! Did you hit your head while I was asleep or something?"

"No! I'm serious," she insisted, looking him in the eyes to show him she meant it. Ichigo's face softened when he realized she wasn't kidding.

"What's with this all of a sudden?" he asked, awkwardly scratching the back of his head. Rukia fidgeted uneasily, her heart rapidly pounding within her chest. Heat kept running through her body as the wierd feeling in her stomach only grew.

"I don't know... It's just... How do I put it...?" she stumbled over her words, unable to find the right way to say it. "The first time I met you, there was something about you, that I couldn't explain... I immediately felt an attraction to you, which is why I didn't hesitate to lend you my powers; because, somehow, I knew, right away, that you were a person who stood for what's right; that you would do anything to protect your family. Up until just now, I didn't even think twice about it, but a conversation I once had with one of your classmates got me to wondering. Even though I consider Inoue-san, Renji and all the others to be my friends, the though of losing *you* was worse than any of them. Back, a while ago, when I felt your spiritual pressure just suddenly disappear, I was so afraid. It was almost as if a part of *me* was gone, instead. It was similar to how I felt after Nii-sama's spiritual pressure had faded, but it was still slightly different...I..."

"I don't know what you see in me, Rukia," Ichigo gazed down at his hand, a flash of guilt in his eyes. "but I'm not as great as you think I am."

"That may be," agreed Rukia. "but I can guarantee that your not as bad as you *think*... It's not the perfect side of you that I was attracted to, rather, the imperfect side... Your imperfect side is what a person is suppose to look at, isn't it? I mean, our imperfection, and mistakes in life, are what makes us who we are. It gives us a reason to improve, and keep going. If we were all perfect, who would we be, but a puppet, blind to our own will? Our flaws and shortcomings are what declares us 'unique'. If none of us did wrong, or faced any consequences, we would all we the same; without hopes and dreams. If we never made mistakes, what would we learn? It's because of *your* mistakes, that I've been able to get past some of *my own* mistakes. If you mess up, you always make up for it by doing something right. That's what I like about you."

She scooted forward, and reached over, placing her small hand in his. "Besides, I don't think *any* of us have a perfect side. If we did, you and I would've never met. So, in all honesty, I'm glad I'm *not* perfect."

"You deserve better." Ichigo told her. "Rukia, you deserve much more than I could *ever* give you."

"Even if that was true, I don't *want* better..." Rukia replied. "'cause, I'm not as great as *you* think, either."

A moment of silence passed by, before Ichigo looked up, their eyes meeting. In that long eerie silence, they searched each other's hearts, and found all they needed.

"Well, if that's what you feel, " he gave a small, but very sincere, smile. "I... I like you too, Rukia, just how you are, and I'd gladly give you my life..."

Rukia pursed her lips, sure her heart was on the edge of exploding in her chest. Ichigo's fingers twitched, as he gently clasped her hand. Closing her eyes, she slowly leaned forward, her warm lips meeting his. Though it was a rather soft, it was passionate none the less, and hard with many emotions. Most importantly, it showed her devotion. It let him know that she truly loved *him*, just as he did *her*.

The raven smiled, as she wrapped her arms around him, resting her chin on his shoulder. Tears of joy freely strolled down her cheeks. She finally knew the answer – She finally knew that she loved Ichigo, and he loved her. He was where she belonged. He was her home.

...

One Week Later

At the Park

"Inoue-san." Rukia spoke up, immediately averting her gaze. "Ichigo and I are-"

"Kuchiki-san," Orihime cut her off, still looking up at the clouds, her hair gently blowing in the breeze. "I know."

"Um, I..." Rukia clutched her chest, awkwardly, worried that she was upset with her. It was a known fact that Orihime had loved Ichigo. "I know you had feelings for Ichigo...I'm..."

"Don't worry, I'm not mad at you. There's no need to say sorry." Inoue smiled reassuringly, taking her by surprise. "I can tell that Kurosaki-kun really cares about you. Ever since you became friends, he slowly began opening up to those around him. All I want is for him to be happy, and if there's anyone out there who can *give* him that happiness, it's you, Kuchiki-san. Thanks to you, I'm a lot more confident than I used to be. Ishida-kun too. He was cold and distant at first, but now, he's really easy to get along with. I'm happy for you two. I know you'll find happiness in him, because I know what type of person Kurosaki-kun is. Kuchiki-san, I wish you the best of luck. Both of you."

Rukia stared at her for a moment, then smiled, as she looked up to see the birds flying overhead.

"Thanks, Inoue-san..."

It was true; Ichigo *had* changed her life, and she'd changed *his*. Sometimes, people are brought together in the most unfortunate situations, and they become inseparable. Just like Hisana and Byakuya. Just like them, Ichigo and her had seemingly crossed boundaries, and went against common sense. If it'd been anyone else, perhaps, they would've stayed in there own world, but Ichigo and her were just different. No how much she tried to avoid it, before she knew it, she once again found herself in his closet. It was rather imperfect in the eyes of some, but, to her, it was a *perfect*imperfection.

Quote - *"To accomplish the perfect perfection, a little imperfection helps."*

Quote - *"No human face is exactly the same in its lines on each side, no leaf perfect in its lobes, no branch in its symmetry. All admit irregularity as they imply change; and to banish imperfection is to destroy expression, to check exertion, to paralyse vitality. All things are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections which have been divinely appointed, that the law of human life may be Effort, and the law of human judgement, Mercy."*

~ End of Chaper ~

A/N: ***What do you think? Good? Bad? Terrible? Okay? Review.***

Special - Renji's Reaction

Chapter Summary

The team has split up, and Ichigo and Renji are currently taking a break from their duty, wherever they are in Karakura town. Renji now knows he and Rukia are together, so Ichigo feels the need to speak with him about it. Sucky summary; better chapter.

Story: ***Perfect Imperfection, Special Chapter 1 – The Reactions - Renji***

Setting: ***The team has split up, and Ichigo and Renji are currently taking a break from their duty, wherever they are in Karakura town.***

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An awkward silence had settled in the room. Ichigo felt rather uncomfortable, and continued shuffling nervously, before finally deciding to speak up.

"Renji, about Rukia-"

"Don't say it." Renji cut him off.

Another moment of silence.

"Yer really somethin' else, Ichigo." the red head commented, tilting his head slightly to look him in the eyes. "Ya did somethin' in only a couple years, which was somethin' I couldn't do in forever. I can tell that Rukia cares 'bout ya, and if *she* trusts ya, so do *I*. Ya had better take care of her, ya hear me?"

"W-wait," Ichigo replied, baffled. "You're not mad?"

"'The hell would I be?" he scoffed, shrugging. "Holdin' a grudge over a stolen crush is childish, if ya ask me, 'specially when ya were out chanced from the beginnin'. Even if she doesn't return my feelings the way I'd like, I'm gonna support her in whatever she *does* choose, 'cause I know the type of person Rukia is. As long as she's *content*, that's all that matters."

Ichigo looked away giving a small smile. "You really do care about her, don't you...?"

"More than my life." Renji answered sincerely. "I'd give my entire soul, just to know she would be happy."

"Sometimes, though, it doesn't hurt to be sad." Ichigo pointed out. "After all, to achieve *perfection*, a little *imperfection*helps once in and a while. Right?"

Renji looked up, taken by surprise. He'd heard that saying before, but from where? Oh, right, Captain Ukitake. Of course. He smirked. "Yeah."

~ Flashback ~

"*Ah, Abarai-kun, how have you been?" Ukitake beamed, as he turned from looking out the window. "I haven't seen you for a while."*

"Yeah, thing's have been...busy lately." Renji scratched his head, handing him a Manuela envelope. He sighed, setting down against the wall in exhaustion.

"*Oh?" Ukitake inquired, raising an eyebrow. "We can talk if you want,"*

"*I've hardly had any time to myself, and to top it off, Matsumoto-fukutaichou has been driving me crazy lately." the red head told him, searching for the correct words. "That woman just doesn't know when to give up. I swear, it's like she has a list of people to irritate, and she doesn't stop bugging ya, until ya have gone completely insane."*

"*I know what you mean." Ukitake gave a chuckle in response. "It may not look like it, but I think her actions may have good intentions behind them. Soul Society is still recovering from Aizen-taichou's betrayal. I think this is her way of reassuring everyone that we CAN get through this. Is that all that been bugging you? Judging by the look on your face, I want to say it's something else."*

"*It's Rukia..." Renji finally admitted, gazing down. "Ever since Ichigo and the others left, she's been distancing herself, 'specially when it was raining the other day. She's always hated the rain...'cause it reminds her of 'him'. I'm really worried about her, Ukitake-taichou..."*

"*I am too..." nodded Ukitake in understanding. "Kuchiki-san just needs some time to recover, just as we all do. Besides, it doesn't hurt to be sad every once in a while, otherwise, we wouldn't know the meaning of happiness."*

Renji looked up at Ukitake, confused. "After all, to achieve perfection, a little imperfection helps, ne? By living in an impure world, and facing obstacles, it allows you to see and appreciate the good things in life. It gives you hope to improve them to look at it this way; if there wasn't any rain, how could we appreciate the Sun, if it always showed? Darkness is what is what gives light it's name isn't it?"

~ End of Flashback ~

"Yeah," Renji repeated, with more enthusiasm than before, as he nodded, looking back up at Ichigo, with a smirk. "'cause *imperfection* is what gives 'perfection' it's name, right?"

"Yeah," Ichigo smirked back. Renji got up, walking towards the door. Before leaving, he glanced over his shoulder.

"Don't forget, ya still had better protect her, Ichigo." Renji warned. "One screw up on yer part, and I can guarantee both me *and* Kuchiki-taichou will have a say so in the matter."

At that moment, realization hit.

'Crap! I still haven't told Byakuya!' Ichigo stared at him for a moment, before replying. "I *will*."

~ End of Special Chapter 1 ~

A/N: ***What do you think? May be slightly OOC, but review anyway. Next up, Byakuya. That'll declare the end of the story. O_O***

Final - Byakuya's Conclusion

Chapter Summary

Soul Society, and Byakuya's office – Ichigo finally decides to confront Byakuya, with some of Rukia's good ol' force, of course.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Story: ***Perfect Imperfection, Final – Byakuya's Reaction***

Setting: ***Soul Society, and Byakuya's office – Ichigo finally confronts Byakuya, with Rukia's force, of course. ^.^***

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"Nii-sama," Rukia knocked on the door. "Ichigo is here. We're here too speak with you."

After a moment a silence, they heard his apathetic voice. "You may come in."

Ichigo gulped, a sick feeling passing through his stomach when she opened the door, pulling him in by his hand. He was convinced Byakuya was gonna kill him. What was he suppose to say? What should he do?

So many questions were swarming his mind as they entered the spacey room. The noble captain sat at his desk, as normal, painting his calligraphy. He glanced up at them, ever so briefly, before making a stroke with his paint brush.

"What did you wish to speak about, Rukia?" he questioned, after a moment of silence had passed by and nobody had spoke.

"I..." Rukia pursed her lips, nervously clutching the sides of her Hakama. "Ichigo and I have developed feelings for each other."

"I know." Byakuya replied, not looking up. "Abarai told me."

Rukia's breath caught in her throat, as she averted her gaze, no longer able to look him in the eyes anymore. Her shoulders trembled uneasily, her heart rapidly pounding in her chest. Ichigo could tell how awkward she was feeling, because he, himself, felt the same, for the tension in Byakuya's Reiatsu was becoming unbearable.

Ichigo bit his lip, his fingers twitching at his side. He'd always hated Byakuya's 'way of giving his opinion'. You never knew *what* the guy was thinking, and his silence only made him that much more unreadable.

He didn't know if he was doing it on purpose, or not, but it really pissed him off, and not because of how *he* felt, either. It was how someone could intimidate his own sister like that, without a second thought. Just who did he think he was?

He took a breath in agitation, as he stepped forward, placing a hand on Rukia shoulder in hopes to calm her down. He was about to give his own opinion on her behalf. Everyone knew how tense she got when she was around her brother, yet he didn't seem to care.

"Just *who*-" he was surprisingly cut off by Rukia, who looked back up at Byakuya, a mixture of frustration and anger in her eyes.

"I know what you're thinking, Nii-sama." she said. "You want to say that I shouldn't involve myself with a human in this way, because I'm from the noble Kuchiki-clan; that I'm lowering my pride. If your going to judge, look at *yourself*first. You've went against the law *three times* just for someone you loved, so you have no right to criticize *me* if *I* do the same!"

"She's right." Ichigo agreed. Rukia snapped her head up to glance at him, tears still in the corners of his eyes from her words to Byakuya.

"Ichigo..." she muttered, seemingly surprised that he'd just stepped in like that.

"If I love her, and she loves me, you can't change our feelings by intimidating us into saying otherwise." he told him. "What kind of brother would do that to his own sister?! Every one knows how tense she gets around you. Yet, you set there, as if it was nothing, daunting her with your silence."

"I do not know what you're talking about, Kurosaki," stated Byakuya, their eyes meeting. "I have no intentions of interfering with your relationship."

"Wait, you...don't?" Ichigo stammered, confusingly. Byakuya looked back down, creating another stroke.

"No. If that is Rukia's desire, I am no one to stop her." he said simply, before giving a tiny smirk. "Rather, it would be pointless, for she would not listen to someone such as I."

It took a moment for to realization to set in that he'd just make a joke. Feeling Rukia's shoulder grow stiff, Ichigo glanced down, to see her quickly look away, her bangs shadowing her eyes. Her lips trembled in a failed attempt to purse them.

"Rukia, are you...blushing?" Ichigo cocked an eyebrow, smirking. He sniggered softly, only to be cut off by Rukia giving him a small shove.

"Don't laugh at me," she said, in a sulky way that slightly favoured a child after being caught stealing a cookie from a cookie jar. "It's *not* like I can help it..."

"It's nothing to be embarrassed about." Ichigo assured her, placing a hand on top of her head. "Byakuya's right, though, you *are* stubborn,"

Byakuya paused, watching them, as he mused. Perhaps his and Hisana's relationship hadn't been exactly like Rukia and Kurosaki's, but there was one similarity they *did* share. It was his imperfect attraction to Hisana that led them to each other, and before they knew it, it'd became a *perfect* imperfection.

First the first time in years, he smiled twice in the same day. *'They are the same, Hisana-san.'*

"Being stubborn isn't always a bad thing..." retorted Rukia.

"You're right, it's not." Ichigo admitted. "Your stubbornness is what I like about you."

They looked up, to see Byakuya standing in front of them.

"Nii-sama, I..." Rukia choked uncertainly on her words.

"Kurosaki Ichigo, I intend to tell you this once, and once only. If there is any harm that ever comes upon Rukia on your behalf..." he pulled out his Zanpakuto, stating it's name. Ichigo gulped, as the deadly 'cherry blossoms' threatened his throat. "There will be no mercy... Your death will be the slowest, and most painful of known deaths in all of Soul Society. This is a promise."

A sudden pinch at his neck made him flinch. Byakuya intensely towered over him, his spiritual pressure rising. "Do I make myself clear...?"

"Yes." Ichigo squeaked. A moment later, his Shikai returned, and Byakuya once again sheathed his sword, walking back towards his desk. This allowed the strawberry to finally let go of the breath he'd been holding in for what felt like an eternity.

"Kurosaki Ichigo, from now on, I do expect you to call me by my proper-" he scoffed, when he looked back to see they were both gone. "Such insolence... Just *what* is it that she sees in him?"

It really irked him. He would never admit it, but down deep, he truly envied Kurosaki, for being able to reach the unreachable, and get through to his own sister, before *he* could. If it hadn't been for Ichigo, convincing him to see the light, he would've never been to able to face Hisana. For that, he was gracious to him. He felt helpless, knowing that he'd brought pain to his little sister in so many ways, but, at the same time, he felt a sense of relief, seeing that she could still find happiness.

Again, he would never say it, but he knew, without a doubt, that he could trust this human boy to do what he couldn't. He could see it in his eyes. Kurosaki would protect Rukia, even at the cost of his own life. That's just the type of person Kurosaki Ichigo was.

~ Two Hours Later ~

The raven and the strawberry sat high in a tree. Ichigo held her close to his chest in a warm embrace, his chin softly resting on the top of her head. He smiled. She seemed so small to

him, and so fragile.

"Ichigo?" Rukia looked up at him, their eyes meeting after a moment.

"Hm?"

"Wh..." she briefly looked away thinking her words through. "Weren't you scared earlier? You didn't have to say that..."

Rukia gazed down, as Ichigo studied her expression, knowing what she was thinking.

"Yeah, I was," he admitted, gently lifting his hand up to hold hers, giving her a pained smile. "but I couldn't stand to see you suffering like that...You're too fragile..."

"What's that suppose to mean...?" Rukia cocked an eyebrow, in agitation. "How am *I* fragile?"

"You *must* be," Ichigo sniggered. "As far as *I* could see, you were practically falling apart back there. Couldn't have*that* now, could we?"

Ichigo smirked, challenged by Rukia's glare. Her cheeks were a visible, but light, shade of pink.

"Hey, I'm the one who had the courage to go there in the first place!" she retorted. "Who was it that had to be dragged all the way to Nii-sama's office, because they were so afraid of him?! Oh, *that's* right, *Ichigo*!"

"Shut up..." Ichigo muttered, looking away. "You're right. Even though you *are* fragile in some ways, I have to admit, you're one of the bravest people I've met..."

"I'm *not* fragile at all, you idiot. As you see, I'm a lieutenant, perfectly capable of protecting myself." Rukia said as-a-matter-of-factly. A second after, her eyes softened, as she blushed. "but thanks..."

She then gave a small, but warm, smile, once again resting her head on his chest. "I love you, Ichigo."

The corner of his mouth slightly curved upward, as he placed a hand on top of her head. "I love you too...Rukia. You little butterfly..."

~ End of Story ~

A/N: ***What do you think? I have to say I'm quite impressed, considering this is my first romance, and only my second IchiRuki, but that me just me. So review, please. Also, if there are any IshiHime (IshidaXOrihime rocks!) fans out there who want me to write an extra chapter, devoted mainly to those two (where Ishida confesses to her, or something, so they get together) please say so. I really don't mind. I was thinking it might be a good idea, but I wasn't fully certain, since this IS really just a IchiRuki fanfic. I adore Ishihime, though, so if you can, please speak your opinion on this matter. Thanks.***

Chapter End Notes

Also, if there are any IshiHime (IshidaXOrihime rocks!) fans out there who want me to write an extra chapter, devoted mainly to those two (where Ishida confesses to her, or something, so they get together) please say so. I really don't mind. I was thinking it might be a good idea, but I wasn't fully certain, since this IS really just a IchiRuki fanfic. I adore Ishihime, though, so if you can, please speak your opinion on this matter. Thanks.

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